

May 12, 2024

The Gospel Project; Adult Daily Guide; Volume 6, Unit 33; Session 1;
TRANSFORMED MURDERER

Opening Bible question:

Question: How many churches of Asia Minor were there?

Answer: 7

PRAY

Today's lesson is the **Transformed Murderer**

Would **XXX** please read the **Setting Section** on page 104.

The first-century church continued to grow in the power of the Holy Spirit. Although the theme so far has been the ministry of Peter in Acts, we backtrack to chapter 9 to take a look at Saul. Saul was a Jew with his mind set on crushing the new religious fervor rising out of the synagogues and city streets in the name of Jesus. He saw it as blasphemous because he didn't yet know the true God. He sought and obtained the power from the chief priest to bind all Jesus's followers, but he did not expect the arresting power of Jesus to bind him.

According to what was just read ~

1. The church of Jesus was growing by who's power? **Holy Spirit.**
2. What was Saul's background up to this time?
 - I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees (Acts 23:6)
 - Observed Stephen being stoned,
 - When the persecution started he believed it necessary,
 - Ravaging the church, entering house after house; and he would drag away men and women and put them in prison..
3. Why was he so fervent in his actions? **He saw Christianity as blasphemy.**
4. Where did he get the authority to attack the Jesus Followers? **Chief Priests**

The **Session in a Sentence** page 104:

In Saul's conversion, we see an example of the grace of God and the power of the gospel, which is able to transform even the most hostile opponents of Jesus.

**THE 1ST SECTION IS TITLED: SAUL EXPERIENCES MERCY FROM THE LORD:
ACTS 9:1-9 ~ Now Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest, 2 and asked for letters from**

him to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them in shackles to Jerusalem. 3 Now as he was traveling, it happened that he was approaching Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him; 4 and he fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?” 5 And he said, “Who are You, Lord?” And He said, “I am Jesus whom you are persecuting, 6 but get up and enter the city, and it will be told to you what you must do.” 7 The men who traveled with him stood speechless, hearing the voice but seeing no one. 8 Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing; and leading him by the hand, they brought him into Damascus. 9 And for three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank.

1. Would you call Saul a ZEALOT? YES What is a Zealot? Fanatical person
2. How is he a Fanatical Person? Wants to kill the disciples of the Lord. v1
3. To what extent did he carry the fanaticism?
 - Went to High Priest for permission to shackle & return them to Jerusalem.v2
 - In other words, he was on a rampage, with an arrest warrant in his hand and hatred in his heart.
 - Why was he convinced that persecuting Christians was the truth path?
 - ➔ His zeal for Judaism was his assurance he was right.
4. What happened to Saul as he approached Damascus?
 - A light from heaven flashed and he fell to the ground v3-4
 - J.I. Parker states, it is because of Saul’s great pride and zeal that “Christ had to show some sign of majesty for Saul to see that he was dealing with God Himself, and not with any mortal man.” COOL Crossway Classic Commentaries.
5. Has anyone here had their eyes opened by *Yeshua* in a similar way?
6. When Saul heard the voice and inquired who it was speaking, and heard that it was He that Saul was persecuting, what do you think Saul was thinking?
 - Fear; Honor; When Humbling truly began.
 - He realized it was Jesus he was persecuting and not the Christians
7. Were there witness to this event? Saul’s companions heard the voice, v7
8. What was the side effects of this incident? Eyes open but blind v8
9. What about the eyes of his heart? Did he see Jesus Now?
10. Do you have any insight why he didn’t eat or drink? Fasting? not seeing what was eating? didn’t want to be fed? He was waiting on the Lord.

THE 2ND SECTION IS TITLED: THE CHURCH IS UNITED BY ONE GOSPEL:
Acts 9:10-16 ~ Now there was a disciple in Damascus named Ananias; and the Lord said to him in a vision, “Ananias.” And he said, “Here I am, Lord.”
11 And the Lord said to him, “Get up and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying, 12 and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in

and lay his hands on him, so that he might regain his sight.” 13 But Ananias answered, “Lord, I have heard from many people about this man, how much harm he did to Your saints in Jerusalem; 14 and here he has authority from the chief priests to arrest all who call on Your name.” 15 But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel; 16 for I will show him how much he must suffer in behalf of My name.”

— — —>On page 110 in our book, *Voices from the Church*, XXX please read that

Do you find that to be True or False?

Where is your faith?

Did Jacob wrestle with God? Asking questions / getting answers? **Israel**

Did Job ask God questions?

Did Moses argue with God, about not suitable, or they are YOUR people

Are we not always to test the spirit of truth?

If this commentator’s correct, why did Jesus not zap Ananias 4 questioning

I don’t have the answers, I’m just asking the questions.

I found 2 other Ananias’s in the Bible. One died in front of Peter for lying (Acts 5), and the other was a Chief Priest who violently apposed Paul (Acts 23 & 24)

1. Does Ananias know the Lord’s voice? **apparently, Here I am Lord v10**
2. Does Ananias know the name, Saul? **Lord, I have heard how much harm v13**
3. How would you react if the Lord asked you to do something, and said the person is waiting for a man OR women, named XXX? **YOU** What would you do and how would you act if it were that personal?
4. Would your fears and trust in Jesus remove all hesitations about the task?
5. Could Jesus have healed Saul’s eyesight himself? **yes.**
6. Why did the Lord call on Ananias? **FOR Saul & Ananias to learn**
 - Jesus chose to work in the world thru the obedience of His followers.
 - Give Ananias confidence in that there are many working parts in the body
 - Both, that the grace of Jesus is so great that using Ananias would highlight it a little clearer to Saul.
1. What are areas in our lives that Jesus might be telling us to walk into, that might seem too unknown or uncomfortable to us? **Sharing the gospel;**
Stepping into a leadership role; **Helping a neighbor;**
Random acts of kindness; **Serving in a ministry;**
7. Verse 16 says Jesus would show Saul how much he would suffer for Christ. What did Paul later say about the suffering? **Rom 8:18 Suffering for Christ would be an honor.**

The 3rd Section:

SAUL PROCLAIMS THE NAME OF THE LORD:

Acts 9:17-20 ~ So Ananias departed and entered the house, and after laying his hands on him said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared

to you on the road by which you were coming, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” 18 And immediately something like fish scales fell from his eyes, and he regained his sight, and he got up and was baptized; 19 and he took food and was strengthened. Now for several days he was with the disciples who were in Damascus, 20 and immediately he began to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues, saying, “He is the Son of God.”

1. Ananias was obedient. Do you wonder what that must have been like to enter a room with someone’s reputation as Saul? But Jesus told him of the plan. Ananias laying hands on Saul, and saying what to him? VS 17
2. What happened to Saul’s eye sight? Scales fell from his eyes and he regained his sight, and he got up and was baptized.v18
3. If you had gone thru Sauls experience, and got your sight back just by a stranger laying hand on you, and he had called you BROTHER, *what would have been your 1st reaction?* Rejoice Cry...
4. Saul got a new lease on life, instead of persecuting Christians, he was now one of them. He had a new heart, and a new drive to tell everyone of what he had gained.
5. What do you imagine they talked about for those few days together in Damascus? Probably enough to learn and be encouraged by them, that he IMMEDIATELY began proclaiming CHRIST.
6. Paul spoke highly of Ananias in Acts 22:12 as he was recalling the event.
7. To learn more about Paul and how he explained his transformation and conversion, it is found in **Philippians 3:4-11.**

In Saul’s conversion, we see an example of the grace of God and the power of the gospel, which is able to transform even the most hostile opponents of Jesus.

Thank You for letting me study with you today.

PRAY